



KANSAS

Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood



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the success of each student.



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Introduction

Family engagement is a critical component of high-quality early care and education. Engaging families in their children's growth and learning can support the healthy social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of young children. These affirmative relationships also support positive life long outcomes for children.

The Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood provide guidance for families, practitioners, community members, and educators to examine current family engagement practices and plan future strategies to engage families in their children's development and learning.

The Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood align with the Kansas Early Learning Standards and the Kansas School Readiness Framework.



“Ready families, in a variety of forms, serve as the primary foundation for their children. Ready families provide safe, stable and nurturing environments that promote healthy development and learning.”

— Kansas School Readiness Framework, 2012

Purpose

The Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood are designed to promote the implementation of family engagement policies and practices both at the state level and local levels. These standards are built on the belief that developing meaningful relationships with families is the cornerstone to engaging all families. The National Association for the Education of Young Children, NAEYC, (Halgunseth, Peterson, Stark and Moodie, 2009, p. 3) highlights six key factors in their comprehensive definition of family engagement:

- 1** Early childhood education programs encourage and validate family participation in decision-making related to their children's education. Families act as advocates for their children by actively participating in decision-making opportunities.
- 2** Consistent, two-way communication is facilitated through multiple forms and is responsive to the linguistic preference of the family. Communication is both program and family initiated, timely and continuous, and is about both the child's educational experience as well as the larger program.
- 3** Families and early childhood programs collaborate and exchange knowledge. Family members share their unique knowledge and skills through volunteering and actively engaging in events and activities. Teachers seek out information about their students' lives, families and communities and integrate this information into their curriculum and instructional practices.

- 4** Early childhood programs and families place an emphasis on creating and sustaining learning activities at home and in the community to enhance each child's early learning.
- 5** Families create a home environment that values learning and supports programs. Programs and families collaborate in establishing goals for children both at home and at their early childhood program.
- 6** Early childhood programs create an ongoing and comprehensive system for promoting family engagement by ensuring that program leadership and teachers and educators are dedicated, trained and receive the supports they need to fully engage families.

These factors support the tenant that true family engagement is more than holding meetings or special events. The Standards in this resource may be used to assess current family engagement practices and more specifically, the purpose of this resource is to:

- Recognize the importance of family engagement as an essential component of early child care and education;
- Provide common language for family engagement across the early childhood service systems and among individual early child care and education professionals; and
- Offer family engagement practices and identify resources to support the implementation of those practices.

The Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood are designed to

Recognize the importance of the families in the early learning years.

Serve as a guide for appropriate family engagement and practices.

Serve as a guide for creating quality interactions and partnerships with families.

are NOT designed to

Serve as a curriculum creating additional responsibilities for families.

Exclude families from a service program, school or activity.

Place all responsibility on an individual family, early childhood educator or service programs.

How will this help my child?

Strengthened families and communities

Optimal child development

Reduced child abuse and neglect

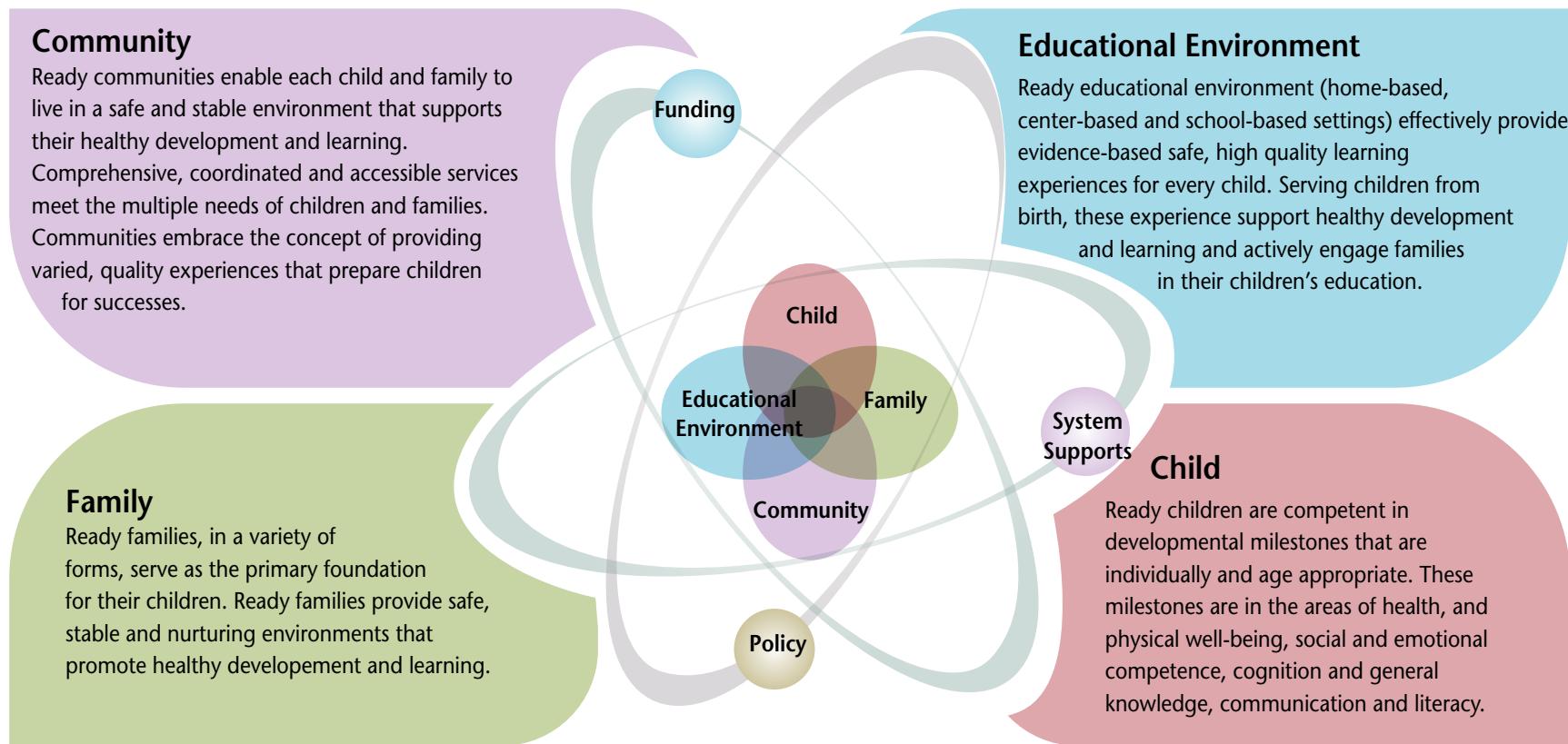
Promotes school readiness



The School Readiness Framework and Family Engagement

The four components of school readiness; the community, educational environment, family and the individual child all function as interdependent systems that have multi-directional influences.

The relationship among these four components in achieving school readiness is shown below in the Kansas School Readiness Framework graphic.



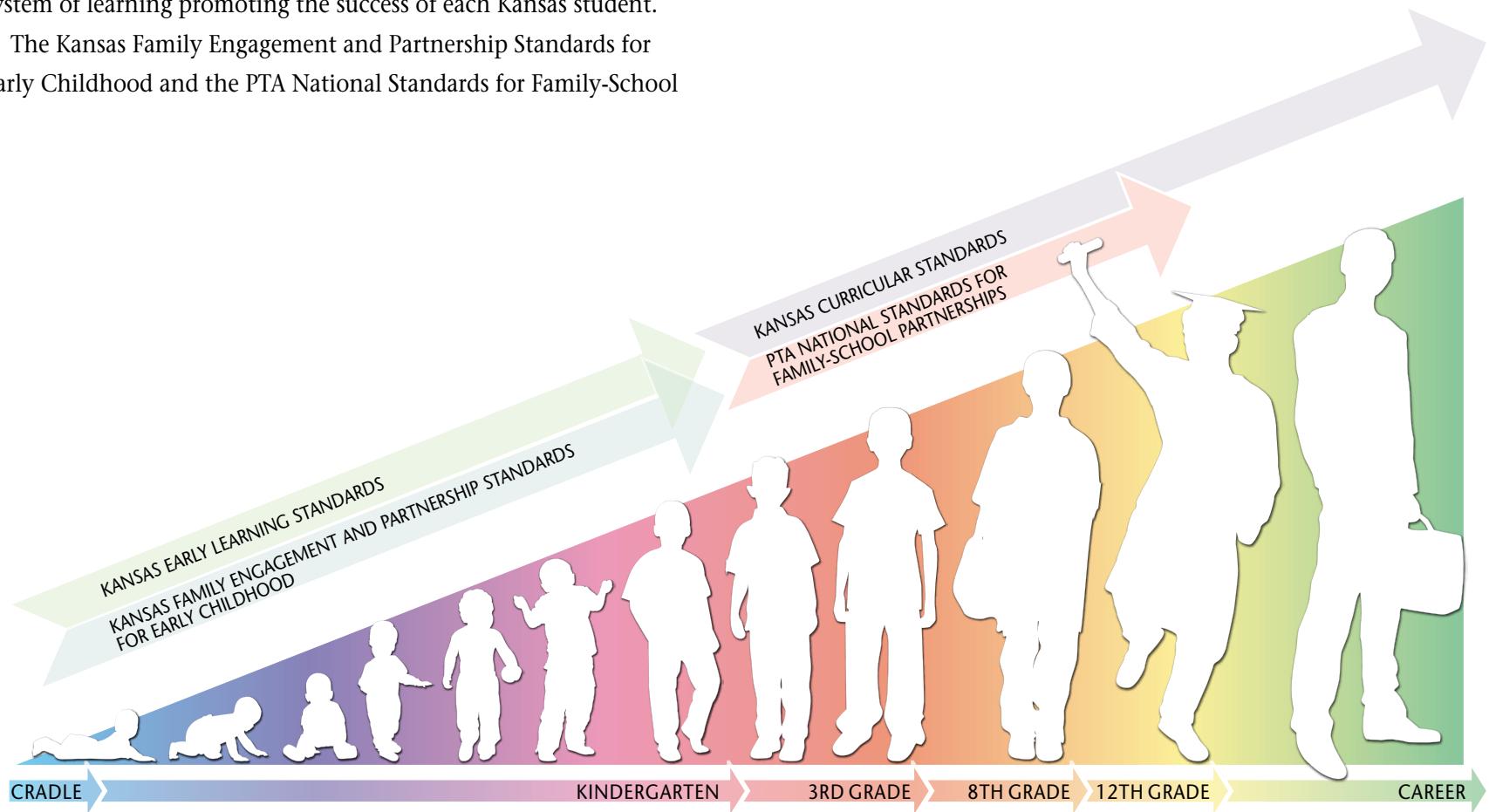
The family component in the School Readiness Framework is the cornerstone of the Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood.

Making the Connection

Connecting the various standards in Kansas provides understanding into the educational journey of each Kansas student. The connection between the Kansas Early Learning Standards and the Kansas Curricular Standards displayed below demonstrates a continuum of academic learning and social-emotional development from birth through grade 12 and beyond. These standards provide a seamless system of learning promoting the success of each Kansas student.

The Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood and the PTA National Standards for Family-School

Partnerships also displayed below provide the foundation for family engagement in the birth through grade 12 educational system. These standards provide the opportunity for families to be engaged with their children's learning at school, at home and in the community.





The Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood include:

Families as...

- Foundation
- Communicators
- Advocates
- Partners
- Community Members





Families as Foundation

Who is responsible?



FAMILIES



PRACTITIONERS



COMMUNITY
MEMBERS



EDUCATORS

All families are recognized and promoted as their child's first and most influential teacher.

- Families provide stability in daily experiences for their children.
- Families provide nurturing environments for their children.
- Families promote learning for their children.
- Children have good physical health as appropriate for their growth.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families provide a safe environment in which children experience continuity of care.
 - Connect families with resources that enable basic necessities in a consistent home.
 - Encourage development of strong caregiver-child bonds that lead to consistent nurturing relationships with primary caregivers and other adults.
- Families ensure the health care and nutritional needs of their children are met.
 - Promote the family's well-being to ensure children's health care and social-emotional needs are met.
- Discuss and share resources to champion children's healthy activity and eating.
- Families practice effective, positive parenting behaviors.
 - Encourage positive parent-child communication and relationships that include reading, talking and playing with their children daily.
 - Foster parental confidence in child development by promoting appropriate skills in communication, cognition, social-emotional, fine motor, gross motor and self-care.
 - Support families as lifelong educators of their children.



Families as Communicators

Who is responsible?



FAMILIES



PRACTITIONERS



COMMUNITY
MEMBERS



EDUCATORS

Early childhood providers and families have effective and ongoing communication.

- Programs and families consistently initiate communication and share knowledge that is timely and facilitated through multiple methods.
- Practices, supports and resources are responsive to the cultural, ethnic, racial, language and socioeconomic characteristics and preference of families and their communities.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families, educators, practitioners and the community engage in consistent two-way communication.
 - Establish multiple modes of communication to share information.
 - Ensure communication between families, educators, practitioners and the community is continuous and fluid.
 - Engage parents in conversations where child assessment data is shared, and parents learn about children's progress.
- Families are able to comfortably and confidently communicate with educators, practitioners and the community.
 - Introduce families to those who will be working with the family and child.
 - Provide families with interpreters for effective communication.
 - Make written documents available in multiple languages.
 - Communicate with families and their children in the context of their language, culture and traditions.
- Families have a shared understanding of desired program outcomes.
 - Have procedures in place to communicate with all families.
 - Provide orientation to the program for families.
 - Encourage family participation by including an open-door policy, family volunteers, and participation opportunities.
 - Integrate families' traditions and culture into instructional practices, events and activities.



Families as Advocates

Who is responsible?



FAMILIES



PRACTITIONERS



COMMUNITY
MEMBERS



EDUCATORS

Families actively engage as an advocate and decision-maker for their child.

- Families have opportunities that promote informed options and decision-making.
- Programs and communities engage families by providing opportunities to be involved in program leadership and decision-making.
- Programs and communities empower families to be advocates.
- Families are aware of resources for selecting and accessing needed services.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families have access to community supports and resources.
 - Utilize a needs assessment to determine supports and resources that will benefit families.
 - Connect families with relevant supports and resources.
 - Support families in navigating services.
- Families are supported by community collaborations.
 - Provide networks of support.
 - Facilitate referrals to needed additional health or educational services.
- Identify and address gaps in services and unmet needs in the community.
- Families are involved within the community based on their interests and goals.
 - Create safe and respectful communities that foster engagement and participation.
 - Encourage families to participate in volunteer opportunities and community service projects based on their interests and goals.



Families as Partners

Who is responsible?



FAMILIES



PRACTITIONERS



COMMUNITY
MEMBERS



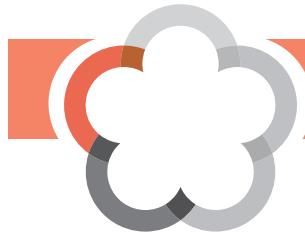
EDUCATORS

Successful partnerships exist between families and professionals based upon mutual trust and respect.

- Early childhood professionals use child and family strengths as a basis for engaging families.
- Families promote learning for their children.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families have strong partnerships and trusting relationships among educators, practitioners and the community.
 - Initiate relationships with families that are receptive, responsive and respectful.
 - Offer formal and informal opportunities for families to build an agreed-upon and collaborative relationship.
- Families, educators, practitioners and the community are equal partners in decision-making that affects children and families.
 - Involve families through the use of feedback tools to inform procedures and strategic planning.
 - Include families in the creation of policies, practices and programs.
- Families develop goals and promote learning with educators, practitioners and the community.
 - Help families identify their interests and articulate their strengths and needs.
 - Work with families to develop goals that incorporate families' interests, culture, traditions, beliefs, and language.
 - Partner with families in planning for transitions within early childhood education.



Families as Community Members

Who is responsible?



FAMILIES



PRACTITIONERS



COMMUNITY
MEMBERS



EDUCATORS

Families are active participants in their communities and connect to resources and services.

- Comprehensive services are available, affordable and accessible.
- Communities provide broad supports for families.
- Families live in safe and stable environments.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families have access to community supports and resources.
 - Utilize a needs assessment to determine supports and resources that will benefit families.
 - Connect families with relevant supports and resources.
 - Support families in navigating services.
- Families are supported by community collaborations.
 - Provide networks of support.
 - Facilitate referrals to needed additional health or educational services.
 - Identify and address gaps in services and unmet needs in the community.
- Families are involved within the community based on their interests and goals.
 - Create safe and respectful communities that foster engagement and participation.
 - Encourage families to participate in volunteer opportunities and community service projects based on their interests and goals.

Example Self-Assessment

Use of Worksheets

The following is a set of self-assessment pages to aid community stakeholders in assessing their current strengths and opportunities for growth within each of the five standards. In this work, “community” is defined locally and can include a geographic area such as a county, city or neighborhood, or a subset within a community such as an early childhood interagency council or other community groups. By individually completing a self-assessment of strengths and opportunities for growth, each stakeholder can review the strengths and opportunities for growth, allowing the group to collectively identify areas in common across all the programs. For example, a

community child care program might identify a strength as communication with families and an opportunity for growth in helping families advocate for themselves. The next step would include building a plan to address common opportunities for growth. Stakeholders can also use this collective data to lift up and celebrate areas of strength. Collectively agreeing on a common plan can help community stakeholders move toward strengthening systemic family engagement and partnership.

This example includes multiple areas across the standards.

STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATION	STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH	POSSIBLE COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES/ACTION
Little Angels Child Care Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent on Center Advisory Council – participates in policy decisions• Parents and staff communicate frequently – in person, text, and e-mail• Parents and teachers meet every other month and review child’s learning goals and progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide parenting education on child development and early learning activities at least quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan parenting education opportunities with partners
USD Preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide parents with samples of child’s work and data weekly• Parents frequently volunteer in classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve communication opportunities between parents and staff on child’s goals• Provide parenting education on learning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan parenting education opportunities with partners
Pubic Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide weekly story times for parent and child together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide story time opportunities also on an evening and Saturday• Ensure culture and language is incorporated• Need to reach fathers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide parenting education on literacy – appropriate book selection and activities to strengthen parenting education opportunities offered by partner program



Families as Foundation

All families are recognized and promoted as their child's first and most influential teacher.

- Families provide stability in daily experiences for their children.
- Families provide nurturing environments for their children.
- Families promote learning for their children.
- Children have good physical health as appropriate growth and learning skills.

STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATION	STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH	POSSIBLE COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES/ACTION



Families as Communicators

Early childhood providers and families have effective and ongoing communication.

- Program and family have consistently initiated communication and share knowledge that is timely and continuously facilitated through multiple methods.
- Practices, supports and resources are responsive to the cultural, ethnic, racial, language and socioeconomic characteristics and preference of families and their communities.

STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATION	STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH	POSSIBLE COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES/ACTION



Families as Advocates

Families actively engage as an advocate and decision-maker for their child.

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- Programs and communities empower families to be advocates.
- Families are aware of resources for selecting and accessing needed services.

STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATION	STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH	POSSIBLE COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES/ACTION



Families as Partners

Successful partnerships exist between families and professionals based upon mutual trust and respect.

- Early childhood professionals use child and family strengths as a basis for engaging families.
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STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATION	STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH	POSSIBLE COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES/ACTION



Families as Community Members

Families are active participants in their communities and connect to resources and services.

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- Communities provide broad supports for families.
- Families live in safe and stable environments.

STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATION	STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH	POSSIBLE COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES/ACTION

Resources:

Child Care Aware® of Kansas – www.kc.childcareaware.org

Families Together, Inc. – www.familiestogetherinc.org Resources:

Halgunseth, L., Peterson, A., Stark, D., & Moodie, S. (2009). Family Engagement, Diverse Families, and Early Childhood Education Programs: An Integrated Review of the Literature (pp. 3-4). NAEYC www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/ecprofessional/EDF_Literature%20Review.pdf

Harvard Family Research Project, Early Childhood Education – <http://www.hfrp.org/early-childhood-education>

Hawaii Department of Education, Early Childhood

www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/SpecializedPrograms/EarlyChildhood/Pages/home.aspx

Kansas Association for Infant and Early Child Mental Health – www.kaimh.org

Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children – www.kaeyc.net

Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc. – www.ksbreastfeeding.org

Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities – www.kccto.org

Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund – www.kschildrenscabinet.org

Kansas Children's Service League – [kcsl.org](http://www.kcsl.org)

Kansas Department for Children and Families – www.dcf.ks.gov/Pages/default.aspx

Kansas Department of Health and Environment – www.kdheks.gov

Kansas Department for Early Childhood – www.kdec.org

Kansas Families and Schools Together, Inc. – www.kfast.net

Kansas Head Start Association – www.ksheadstart.org

Kansas Inservice Training – www.kskits.org

Kansas Parents as Teachers Association – www.kpata.org

Resources:

Kansas Department of Education: Early Childhood, Special Education and Title Services – www.ksde.org/default.aspx?tabid=326

Kansas Technical Assistance System Network – www.ksdetasn.org/cms

Maryland Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Development

http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

<http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/department-of-early-education-and-care/>

National Association for the Education of Young Children – <http://www.naeyc.org/>

National Head Start Association – www.nhsa.org

Parents as Teachers – www.parentsasteachers.org

PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships – <http://www.pta.org/nationalstandards>

The Office of Head Start National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement – <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs>

Notes

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